

Message from the Editor

This is the first Malay and English translation of the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra in the world. This Sutra was widely circulated and practised in China during the Tang and Song dynasties. Later, owing to lurbulent times (caused by natural disasters and calamities), very few people propagated this Sutra. Thus, the circulation of this rare and precious Dharma treasure stagnated and ceased; it finally became silent and unheard of, no longer radiating its Dharma light throughout the universe.

This Sutra is published with the aim that all sentient beings living in the present, troubled and tumultuous world would benefit from it. The Sutra would help beings leave sufferings and obtain happiness, increase prosperity and longevity, remove karmic obstacles, eliminate disasters and calamities, remove enmity and hatred, fulfil all wishes and quickly be led onto the Buddha's way.

In order to disseminate this Sutra throughout the world, it is being translated into the modern Chinese language, as well as English and Malay languages with an attached glossary for the convenience of readers, It could help sentient beings overcome worries and sufferings and more people can be made aware of its importance in the present materialistic life. Since most readers are conversant with the simplified Chinese characters, this book utilises such characters in the Modern Chinese version. However, the original Classical Chinese version is still retained and published in the complex Chinese characters.

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2) Upasaka Chua Boon Tuan (President of the Rawang Buddhist Association, Malaysia), who translated the Sanskrit version of the Revised Complete Usnisa Vijaya Dharani into Romanised phonetic transcriptions. He also revised and edited the Siddham Sanskrit version of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani, sourced from the Tripitaka.

3) Upasika Lim Ah Lan (associate professor, University of Malaya); her daughter Koh Li Wearn, and Wu Swee Ting (of Sunway College Buddhist Society, Malaysia), who worked together to translate the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra, Prefaces, the Miracle Records of the Revised Usnisa Vijaya Dharani and other materials into the English and Malay languages.

4) Upasaka Tony K. Lin from Taiwan, who contributed various materials and publications related to the Japanese version of the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani.

- 5) Upasaka Gan Boon Tai (former vice principal of Chung Hua High School in Seremban, Malaysia), and Mr. Vipin Patel (former English Department Head from the same school), who assisted in editing the English and Malay translations.
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As our knowledge of Buddhism is limited, it is inevitable that the English and Malay Language translations would have errors and omissions. We sincerely welcome suggestions for future improvement.

Foreword

The Origin of Transmigration of Birth and Death in the Six Realms

Sentient beings from time without beginning have been transmigrating in the six realms of heaven, Asura, human, animal, hungry ghost and hell; continuously going through different modes of birth (i.e. womb-born, egg-born, spawn-born and birth by transformation). They are unable to escape from the cycle of karmic retribution of cause and effect, nor be liberated from sufferings. It is even more pitiful that sentient beings suffering in continuous transmigration are themselves unable to realise the universal truth

of suffering, emptiness, non-self and impermanence. Instead, they regard suffering as happiness and do not seek liberation.

Who actually controls our destination? Who causes us to transmigrate in the six realms of existence, going through the four different modes of birth? Buddha said this is completely caused by the power of our karma. Owing to delusions, we create bad karma that brings sufferings to fruition. Thus, bad karma becomes the root of sufferings for all sentient beings and also the force of continuous transmigration. How is bad karma formed? It is induced by the karma from the impure body, speech and mind of all sentient beings. Hence, to eliminate the three poisons (i.e. desire/greed, hatred and ignorance), one must diligently cultivate the three profound skills (i.e. precepts, meditation and wisdom), in order to purify the body, speech and mind. This is the basic cultivation to remove sufferings and achieve happiness, diligently cultivating the three profound skills to eliminate the three poisons, turning oneself away from defilement and being awakened to enlightenment, have been the principles propagated through the ages. With reference to complete practice and cultivation, there are eighty-four thousand Dharma-doors of which each and every Dharma-door will lead to the shore of Nirvana. However, prevailing in this Dharma-ending Age are sentient beings living in the evil world of the five turbidities with poor foundation in Dharma cultivation, with the five skandhas blazing in strength, and their karmic hindrances deep and formidable. Hence, the chosen Dharma-door must be suitable for this period and in accordance with the cultivator's original qualities. Therefore, one should not be ignorant of the right selection.

Buddha's Power Protects and Saves Beings from the Sea of Sufferings

Though there are many Dharma-doors within the Buddha Dharma for cultivation leading to Buddhahood, essentially there are only two main Dharma-doors - those depending on "self effort" and those depending on "others' effort" (with the power and assistance of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas). The "self effort" of sentient beings is very limited and to achieve some measure of success, it would be extremely difficult. However, the "Pure Land" and "Dharani" Dharma-doors employing "others' effort" in cultivation display phenomenal success. For example, an ordinary layman, so long as he believes, vows, upholds and recites Amitabha Buddha's name for seven days to achieve a single mind without any confusion, would be able to obtain a rebirth in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. Even those sentient beings who have committed various bad karma, just before the end of their lives, if they repent and reform, and are able to be mindful of Amitabha Buddha in ten successive thoughts, would all be reborn in the Pure Land. Once reborn in The Land of Ultimate Bliss, they could immediately leap beyond the three realms (i.e. realm of desire, form and formless), not falling into transmigration, non-retreating until they become Ekajati-pmtibadda and achieve Buddhahood. This achievement depends upon the power of Amitabha Buddha's great vows and the assistance of the cultivator's own three personal provisions (i.e. faith, vows and practice).

To quote the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra, "... if someone hears this Dharani even for just a moment, he will not undergo karmic retribution from the evil karma and severe

hindrances accumulated from thousands of kalpas ago, that would otherwise cause him to revolve in the cycles of birth and death - in all kinds of life forms in the evil paths - hell, hungry ghost, animal, realm of King Yama, Asuras ... ferocious animals, crawling creatures and even ants and other life forms ... he will be reborn in the Buddhalands, together with all the Buddhas and Ekajati-pratibadda Bodhisattvas, or in a distinguished Brahmin or Ksatriya family, or in some other wealthy and reputable families ... "

The Sutra also expresses, "... If one can chant this Dharani 21 times daily, he is worthy of accepting all the immense worldly offerings and will be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss after his death. If one chants this Dharani constantly, he will attain Maha Parinirvana and be able to lengthen his lifespan besides enjoying the most extraordinary bliss ... "

Hence, it can be said that both Dharma-doors - "Pure Land" and "Dharani" - are closely linked and are in perfect harmony, complementing each other. Both Dharma-doors are extremely profound and rare, with inconceivable power that can completely eradicate the sufferings of sentient beings in the cycles of birth and death in the six paths.

In the translation of Mantra and Sutra of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani that Eradicates Karmic Obstruction by Dharma Master Divakara, the Lord of Heaven requested the Bhagavan Buddha, "... May the Tathagata have compassion on Devaputra Susthita and all other heavenly beings. Also, for the sake of the beings in the future Dharma-ending Age, kindly give a discourse on this Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Mantra so that we could cultivate and may all beings be eternally freed from the sufferings of the eight adversities ... " "Beings in the future Dharma-ending Age" refers to the time of the Lord of Heaven's requisition till the endless future.

Owing to the request of the Lord of Heaven, all sentient beings in the six paths are liberated from the cycles of birth and death, and having crossed over the great sea of afflictions, will finally attain the great enlightenment. Why is this Dharani so great and unsurpassed?

This is because the Lord of Heaven's request gave rise to Usnisa Vijaya Dharani that grants each being a lifebelt from the sea of sufferings. Thus, leaving the agony and pain in the eight adversities forever and enjoying the tranquility and bliss of Maha Parinirvana.

It is apparent that the Buddha does not restrict to saving only the human beings, but also extends to all sentient beings in the six paths in other dimensions of the universe.

Therefore, Usnisa Vijaya Dharani is the unsurpassed and wonderful medicine that can universally free sentient beings from the sufferings in the cycles of birth and death. This has fully demonstrated the great compassion of the Buddha to save the world.

The Reason and Origin of the Buddha's Proclamation

According to the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra, this Usnisa Vijaya Dharani was proclaimed together by Buddhas as many as eighty-eight kotis (hundred million) of the grains of sand of Ganges River as being able to eradicate all karmic obstructions and destroy the sufferings in all impure evil paths. This Dharani originated from Devaputra Susthila in Trayastrimsa Heaven, who, after his death, would fall into the animal realm for seven successive lives. Following that, he would fall into hell to endure great sufferings. Only after he had undergone his retribution in hell would he be born as a human. Even then, he would be born in a poor and disreputable family. For seven hundred lives he would be without eyes and be born blind. Out of compassion for Devaputra Susthita, the Lord of Heaven paid homage to the Buddha and appealed to the Buddha to give a discourse on the way of liberation from sufferings.

Instantly, multiple rays of light radiated from the usnisa (crown of the head) of the Tathagata, illuminating the world in all ten directions. Then, to liberate Devaputra Susthita from falling into the evil paths, the Buddha proclaimed the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani and the inconceivable, great and unsurpassed merits of upholding and reciting this Dharani.

The Great and Unsurpassed Merits of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani

The merits and awesome power of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani are in-conceivable.

According to the Records of the Teaching of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra by Great Dharmapala Master Fa Cong (in the Tang dynasty), the great and unsurpassed merits of this Dharani can be categorised into ten doors as follows:

1. The door of taking refuge under the sages.
2. The door of revealing the Dharma Body.
3. The door of purifying evil paths.
4. The door of good and brightness initiation.
5. The door of spiritual power protection.
6. The door of lengthening the lifespan.
7. The door of integrating concentration and wisdom.
8. The door of Vajra offering.
9. The door of universally attaining purity.
10. The door of accomplishing Nirvana.

" ... The beings in China have committed many offences, and even those who have left the home life have violated the precepts. Only the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra can eliminate all the evil karma of sentient beings... "

The old man added: **"... If you could bring back this Sutra from India for circulation, that would be equivalent to paying homage to all sages universally, extensively benefiting all sentient beings, liberating the beings in the under world and repaying the kindness of all Buddhas! ..."**

Buddhapala heeded the advice and returned to India to get the Sanskrit version of Usnisa Vijaya Sutra. In the fourth year of Yi Feng (679 AD), Buddhapala was back in Changan. Buddhapala translated the first version of the Sutra with Tripitaka Dharma Master Divakara and Du Xing Yi. The Sutra was later translated again with a Chinese monk known as Shun Zhen. After the completion of the second translation, Buddhapala took the original Sanskrit text with him into the Wu Tai Mountain and was never seen again.

A verse was later written:

Buddhapala came from India to Wu Tai Mountain, Brought the Usnisa *Vijaya Dharani Sutra* from afar, Manjushri Bodhisattva led him into the Vajra Cave, That closed and he was never seen again.

The Translated Text and Annotation of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra from Past Dynasties
There were many Dharma masters who later separately translated this Sutra and Dharani, including Dharma Masters Yi Jing, Subhakara-simha, Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra, Dharmadeva, Dharmaraksa, Jnana, etc. The difference was only in the length of the Mantra. According to the records of Wu Che in *The Mirade Stories of the Revised Usnisa Vijaya Dharani*, the translated text of Tripitaka Dharma Master Vajrabodhi (that is the *Revised Complete Version of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani*) had the most profound and complete verses.

Dharma Master Divakara's translation of Mantra and Sutra of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani that Eradicates Karmic Obstruction was the only version that detailed the causes and conditions of Devaputra Sushita's previous life. Otherwise, the contents of all the translated texts of Usnisa Vijaya Sutra were almost the same. This Sutra explained in detail the law of cause and effect that should not be taken lightly. In particular, the utterance of harsh speech, which is the most fearful amongst the ten evil deeds, is very much like a fierce fire that burns off the seven noble wealth and seven precious wealth. It can also destroy all worldly merits and merits that transcend the world. After the heavenly retribution ends, Devaputra Sushita would fall to hell because he had uttered harsh speeches towards his mother and the Sangha in his previous life.

Therefore, the Buddha explained to the Lord of Heaven in this Sutra that one must not slander one's parents and the Sangha. One has to be respectful and make offerings to them, speak politely, be full of praises, and be grateful for their kindness at all times. Only from our parents can we gain the compassion and love within the three realms. The blessings of the three periods of time cannot exceed the merits from making offerings to the Sangha.

The translation of *The Buddha 's Teaching of All Buddhas' Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra* by Dharma Master Dharmadeva during the Song dynasty consists of Mantra and Sutra, except that two of the sentences in the Mantra were doubled and the phrases were generally more repetitive compared to the translated text from the Tang dynasty. In this version, the contents also differ in that it was Amitayus Tathagata who transmitted this

Mantra to Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva at the time when Shakyamuni Buddha was at the Good Dharma Hall in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. This Mantra was very similar to the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Mantra as recorded in the Ming Empress 's Dream of Buddha 's Teaching on the Most Rare, Great Merit and Virtue Sutra and as recorded in the Complete Mantras in the Tripitaka by Emperor Kang Xi during the Ching dynasty.

During the Song dynasty, Great Dharma Master Aksobhya Vajra from India included Usnisa Vijaya Dharani into Yoga Offering Ceremony. The Mantra was identical to that translated by Dharma Master Dharmadeva.

The prologue to this Sutra can be found in the Records of the Teaching of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra, Volumes 1 & 2 by Dharma Master Fa Cong during the Tang dynasty, and the Explanation of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra by Dharma Master Bo Ting (Xu Fa) from Ciyun Mountain during the Ching dynasty.

The annotation of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani was written by Great Dharma Master Vajrabodhi and Hong Fa in the Sanskrit-Chinese Bilingual Text. Another source of reference is the Explanation of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani by Tripitaka Dharma Master Amoghavajra.

The Scholastic Study of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra

In 1884, a German scholar in England, Muller Friedrich Max, together with a Japanese, Bunyiu Nanjio, and others, proof-read the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani written on palm leaves from the Horiuzi Monastery, records of Asharagio, the revised text of Ziogon from the Ling Yun Monastery and the inscription in the Asakusa Monastery. The study was published in the Anecdota Oxoniensia, Aryan Series, Volume 1, Part 111 together with the Sanskrit Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra.

Muller described in his book that circulation of this Dharani was very widespread. It was not restricted to the Northern Buddhism; and in fact it was recorded in the Southern Buddhism as well.

In recent years, the study of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani has been seen in the works of Ogihara Kumoki (in the Japanese language), and Wang Hong Yuan from Hong Kong (in the Chinese language), in their respective publications of The Study of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani.

In addition, the world famous Japanese Zen scholar D.T. Suzuki translated the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani into the English language and this was included in the Manual of Zen Buddhism. Another Japanese scholar, Takenaka Tomoyasu, also translated the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani into Romanised phonetic transcriptions and further explained the sentences in the Mantra. His work was kept in The Dharanis of the School of Lin Ji (in the Japanese language).

In 1992, Upasaka Liu Guo Xiang (Yuan Xiang) from Taiwan translated the Usnisa

Vijaya Dharani Sutra and The Miracle Stories of the Revised Usnisa Vijaya Dharani from the Classical Chinese version into the Modern Chinese version. In 1993, it was jointly published with the Medicine Master Sutra.

Usnisa Vijaya Dharani was once Widely Circulated in China and Japan

There were many cultivators who upheld this Dharani in China, Japan and Tibet. It was frequently adopted in the daily recitation by Zen School and was very efficacious. Tibetan cultivators chanted the Dharani as part of their morning and evening recitations or for transferring merits to those who had passed away.

As recorded in Wu Che's The Miracle Stories of the Revised Usnisa Vijaya Dharani, during the Tang dynasty, Buddhapala brought the Sutra into China between 676 AD - 679 AD. It was translated and later circulated to all Buddhist monasteries in China and there were many people who upheld and recited it. It was common to experience miracles and there were too many to be recorded. In his article, Wu Che emphasized the importance of sincerity, but the merits would be feeble and not obvious if there were mistakes or omissions in the Mantra. There is a specific way to uphold and recite the Dharani as stated in the sagely teaching. One might not get a response if one simply did just as one wished.

In the summer of 925 AD, there was a severe drought throughout Japan. The Great Dharma Master Zun Yi from the School of Tian Tai was commanded by the Emperor to request for rain by reciting the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani. There was a favourable response and the whole nation was delighted. Since then, the secret Dharma of the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani was very prevalent in Japan.

The circulation of the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani originated in 776 AD. On the eighth day of the second lunar month, Imperial Emperor Dai of the Tang dynasty specifically instructed all bhiksus and bhiksunis in China to recite this Dharani. His Majesty gave them a time limit of one month to master and to memorise the Dharani. Everyday, they had to recite the Dharani twenty-one times. Since then, on the first day of the first lunar month, they had to submit an annual report to the Emperor. In the fourth month of year 860 AD, Japanese Emperor Ching issued the same order nationwide to persistently recite the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani 21 times a day.

From the large circulation and the prevailing dissemination of the Dharani as mentioned above, it can be seen that the Chinese and the Japanese had a truly deep affinity with the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani.

The Vestiges of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Stone Banners

The construction of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra banners (i.e. stone banners carved with the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra) was very prevalent late on in the Tang dynasty and the Five Dynasties (Song, Qi, Liang, Chen, Sui), and there are many banners remaining in

China. It originated from the teachings in the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra translated by Buddhapala.

In the Sutra, the Buddha preached to the Lord of Heaven:

"... If someone could write this Dharani and place It on the top of a tall banner, high mountain or in a tall building or even keep It in a stupa; Lord of Heaven! If there are bhiksus or bhiksunis,

upasakas or upasikas, laymen or laywomen who have seen this Dharani atop the above structures; or if the shadows of these structures should fall on beings who come near to the structures, or particles of dust from the written Dharani are blown onto their bodies; Lord of Heaven! If the accumulated evil karma of these beings should cause them to fall into the evil paths such as realms of hell, animal, King Yama, hungry ghost, Asura and others, they will all be spared from the evil paths, and they will not be tainted with filth and defilement. Lord of Heaven! Instead, all Buddhas will bestow predictions (Vyakarana) onto these beings who will never regress from the path to Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi (complete enlightenment) ... "

In 840 AD, Emperor Wen of the Tang dynasty built a banner carved with the Dharani Sutra at a gully in the Huyang Mountain Range. It was located between Ru Village and Dou Village in Wu Tai County. This was where Buddhapala met the old man (where the Usnisa Vijaya Monastery now stands). The ones that remain now were built later. One was constructed in 1026 AD (Song dynasty) and the other was in the early years of the Republic of China.

Situated 5 kilometres northeast of Dou Village is the Fo Guang Monastery. It is the treasured jewel of China's ancient architecture and historical sites. It is well known both locally and internationally. An octagonal Sutra banner was built in front of its main shrine hall in the tenth lunar month of 857 AD (Tang dynasty) by a female disciple, Ning Gong Yu. Another banner, constructed in 877 AD (Tang dynasty), was located outside the Manjushri Hall.

Not far away, southwest of the Fo Guang Monastery, is the Guang Ji Monastery. It is located in the backyard of Wu Tai County Museum, commonly known as the Xi Monastery. At the front of Manjushri Hall of the Xi Monastery, there is an octagonal Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra stone banner. From its shape and decorative carving, it should have been constructed during the Tang dynasty. There is another stone Sutra banner about seven metres tall built in 1035 AD (Song dynasty) at the Yan Qing Monastery, northwest of the Guang Ji Monastery.

The Qi Fo Monastery is located north of Taihuai City (i.e. the location of the Great White Stupa) in Wu Tai Mountain. There is another octagonal stone banner constructed on the hillside in front of the monastery in 1080 AD (Song dynasty). On the hilltop, a short distance away, stands another octagonal stone banner about 2 metres in height. Built in the same year, it has collapsed but the top and the body structure of the banner is still

intact and complete.

The Pi Shan Monastery, located 2.5 kilometres northeast of the Great White Stupa in Guangming Village, is famous among countries in South East Asia. There is a carved Sutra stone banner erected in the eighth lunar month of 1488 AD (Ming dynasty).

35 kilometres southwest of the Great White Stupa lies the County of Fanzhi. The Mi Mo Monastery is located 2.5 kilometres northeast of Yantou Village. There stand two carved octagonal stone banners on its hillside. One was built in 1178 AD and the other in 1147 AD (Jing dynasty).

Other stone banners like that of the Shang Hua Yan Monastery in the City of Datong, Shanxi Province, was built in 1076 AD (Liao dynasty). There are two more Sutra banners outside the Bai Ta Monastery on Zongnan Mountain. One of them was written by Wu Ke in 831 AD (Tang dynasty).

Another Sutra banner was erected in 885 AD (Tang dynasty) at the Kai Yuan Monastery of Zheng State in Henan Province. It was rebuilt in 930 AD (Tang dynasty). In the County of Guan, Hebei Province, a Sutra banner was constructed between 1117 AD - 1122 AD (Jing dynasty) in Wanglong Village. This banner had nine levels, about 7 metres tall, with the largest diameter at about 1 metre, but it did not have a foundation base.

In addition, the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani wall carvings in six styles of calligraphy including Sanskrit and Chinese, were found inside Ju Yong Guan, in the Province of Hebei. The sentences were identical to those recorded in The Important Collection of Yoga Meal Offering Ceremony.

The Usnisa Vijaya Dharani stone banners, Usnisa Vijaya Dharani bells and Usnisa Vijaya Dharani stupas can be easily found in parts of China, Japan and Tibet. We cannot possibly narrate them all in detail.

The Usnisa Vijaya Dharani stupa in Malaysia is located at Klebang Kecil, Malacca. It was built by the Karma Kagyu Dharma Society Malacca from the School of Vajrayana in 1991.

The Causes and Conditions of the Large Circulation of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani in Malaysia and Other Places in the World

In 1985, Upasaka Chua Boon Tuan, Chairman of the Rawang Buddhist Association in the state of Selangor, Malaysia, translated the Dharma Master Vajrabodhi's Sanskrit version of the Revised Complete Usnisa Vijaya Dharani into Romanised phonetic transcriptions. He has commendable knowledge of both Siddham Sanskrit and Roman transliteration. The Dharanis that he translated (such as Shurangama Mantra, the Great Compassionate Mantra, the Ten Small Mantras, Mantra Amoga-pasa Hridaya Mantra, Maha-

pratisaravidya, and The Hundred Syllables Mantra of Vajrasattva} are based on the Chinese-Sanskrit Dictionary written by Professor Ogihara Kumoki and Professor Tsujinao Shirou. They are Japanese scholars of the Sanskrit language. The accuracy of the phonetics is very high and incomparable.

On 13th April 1993, Dharma Master Shi Yi Xiu, resident bhiksuni of Ching Lian Hall in the town of Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, was the pioneer who introduced Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra in the Ci Hang (Journey of Compassion) column of a local Chinese newspaper, Nanyang Siang Pau. Copies of Usnisa Vijaya Sutra (translated into Modern Chinese version by Upasaka Liu Guo Xiang) and Usnisa Vijaya Dharani cassettes (in Sanskrit phonetic) were freely distributed.

On 17th June 1993, I introduced this Sutra again in the Fo Xue (Buddhism) column in another Chinese daily, Sin Chew Jit Poh. This Sutra was introduced and published again in the newspaper for the few years that followed. The responses from the readers were very encouraging. Through telephone conversations, many disciples professed that they had experienced the inconceivable and meritorious power of this Dharani themselves.

The Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Group Chanting Session of the Rawang Buddhist Association Malaysia, was established in 1992. The disciples also had numerous inconceivable experiences. Upasaka Lee See Guan and Upasika Chuang Ean Leng documented some special cases in a video cassette entitled Documentary of Speaking the Dharma through Experience. The cassette is now kept at the Rawang Buddhist Association. Many other Way places in Kota Bharu, Ipoh and other towns in Malaysia also hold the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Group Chanting Session.

The Guan Yin Monastery in the town of Sandakan, Sabah, Malaysia, led by resident bhiksuni Dharma Master Guang Ci, also founded a Group Chanting Session and there were many miraculous responses as well.

From the above mentioned cases, it was proven that Usnisa Vijaya Dharani is the most invaluable Dharma treasure that can solve the problems of various pains and sufferings, afflictions, karmic hindrances, retribution, etc., of a realistic human life (including sentient beings in the six paths).

In addition, in May 1995, a fine audio-cassette featuring the origin of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra, its great and unsurpassed merits, miraculous responses and the Sanskrit phonetic recitation, was produced by Upasaka Wong Tian Hock, Upasaka Poo Chin Chuan and television artist Upasaka Teoh Kee Hock. This cassette and the Modern Chinese Usnisa Vijaya Sutra by Upasaka Liu Guo Xiang were jointly sponsored by Associate Professor Lim Ah Lan and her sister Lim Tiew Ming, Lee Kim Hong and others. These materials have been distributed throughout Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Australia, the America, Canada and other important Way places.

Other than those mentioned above, through the assistance of Upasaka Liu Guo Xiang, the

books and cassettes were distributed to over one hundred important Way places in Taiwan.

**The Widespread Distribution of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani
Sacred Stone Tablets Over
Continents, Oceans, Lakes, and Seas**

Upasaka Chua Boon Tuan revised and edited the Siddham Sanskrit version of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani, The Sanskrit Revised Complete Version of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani by Dharma Master Vajrabodhi was taken as the core text. Using the Chinese-Sanskrit Dictionary as the yardstick, he proof-read the core text with the Sanskrit text of Dharma Master Subhakara-Simha and Chi Song Acarya (Guru). He also made references to all Sanskrit Usnisa Vijaya Dharani in Anecdota Oxoniensia, Aryan Series, Volume 1, Part III edited by Muller Friedrich Max. Any omissions and mistakes were then revised and corrected.

During the period of late 1993 to 2000, members of the Malaysian Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Group Chanting Session resolved to accomplish the great vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva. The newly revised Sanskrit Usnisa Vijaya Dharani was carved on granite stone tablets that were donated by the members. The back of the tablets were carved with the Sanskrit names of Shakyamuni Tathagata, Ratna-shikini and the Seven Tathagatas, the Four Maha Bodhisattvas and Maitreya Bodhisattva. Each tablet measured 60.96 cm by 45.72 cm, was about 2.5 cm thick and weighed about 20 kg. These Sacred Stone Tablets were later dropped into the Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, Arctic Ocean, Antarctic Ocean, South China Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, Black Sea, Caspian Sea as well as other big lakes and sources of some major rivers.

This was done to help and liberate sentient beings suffering in the three evil paths and all beings of the four modes of birth and the nine types of life form, so that they would be eternally freed from the evil destinies of hell, animal and hungry ghost, and quickly be reborn in the Buddhlands.

Currently, the Sacred Stone Tablets have been released into the rivers, lakes and oceans of many countries, including China, Tibet, Nepal, India, Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Mauritius, Australia, New Zealand, Palau, Guam, Hawaii, Fiji, Rarotonga, Tahiti, Norway, Sweden, Finland, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Iceland, Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Kenya, Alaska, Canada, the USA, Bahamas, Bermuda and Argentina.

Wherever the Sacred Stone Tablets were placed, the awesome spiritual power of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani was inconceivable, with the protection of devas and dragons and the frequent appearances of auspicious phenomena. To avoid criticism, this is not discussed in detail in this book.

During the period from 27th September 1996 to 9th October 1996, Upasika Tew King

Hek and other members of the Rawang Buddhist Association, Malaysia, vowed to bring fifteen pieces of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sacred Stone Tablets (each tablet weighing 5 kg, and measuring about 42 cm in length, 30 cm in width and 2.5 cm in thickness) to be presented to the twelve important monasteries of Wu Tai Mountain in China as follows:

The Dai Luo Ding Monastery, Pi Shan Monastery, Shu Xiang Monastery, Luo Hou Monastery, Xian Tong Monastery, Ta Yuan Monastery, Zhu Lin Monastery, Long Quan Monastery, Pu Hua Monastery, Pu Sa Ding, Yuan Zhao Monastery, and Zun Sheng (Usnisa Vijaya) Monastery.

This was meant as making offerings to all Triple Jewel of ten directions and three periods of time. At the same time, they also distributed copies of Sanskrit phonetic cassettes and Malaysian newspaper articles on Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra to the Sangha in the respective monasteries. The remaining three tablets were presented to the HuaYen Monastery in Datong, the Da Ci En Monastery in Xian and the Guang Ji Monastery in Beijing.

On 27th June 1999, the students from Sunway College Buddhist Society, in the state of Selangor, Malaysia (Wong Shui Yun, Wu Swee Ting, etc.) erected a 72 kg Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sacred Stone Tablet, at the highest mountain in South East Asia - Mount Kinabalu (4095m above sea level), which is located in the state of Sabah, Malaysia.

Other occasions regarding the distribution of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sacred Stone Tablets throughout the world are recorded in Appendix 8.

Summary

The Sutra carved on the stone wall in the Zhong Yuan Monastery of Suzhou, China, reads:

To lead all beings of four modes of birth and nine types of life form,
To attain Maha Parinirvana,
No being, in fact, has been liberated,
No teaching surpasses the Vajra Sutra.
To eradicate the offences and accumulate blessings,
To purify all evil paths,
No sutra supersedes the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani.

Another verse of an ancient cultivator says:

Reverend Buddhapala paid Homage to Wu Tai Mountain, Bodhisattva Manjushri transformed as a cultivator and conveyed that, without Usnisa Vijaya Dharani in the Eastern Land, All sentient beings would not be able to leave sufferings.

Hence, this Mantra is the treasure of the Dharma and is rare in this world. It has immense spiritual power and its merits, virtues and rewards are incomparable and inconceivable. It could even benefit the whole nation as well as the future generations. There is no other Dharani that can universally and expediently liberate all sentient beings and purify all destinies.

Any true disciples of the Triple Jewel who have the affinity to encounter this invaluable, incomparable, sacred, responsive and the most unique treasure of the Dharma should follow and practise the teaching and propagate it widely. Only then could we repay the four kinds of kindness, aid those suffering in the three evil paths, and live up to the compassion and teachings of all Buddhas of the ten directions.

Preface 1 (Emperor Yong Le of the Ming Dynasty)

I think the sole purpose why the Tathagatas expounded the teachings of Mahayana, disclosed multiple expedient Dharma-doors, preached hundreds and thousands of Sutras and Dharma, is none other than to deliver (hereafter takes the meaning of liberate) all sentient beings from falling into evil karmic retribution.

The Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra and Mantra are both the wisdom seals of all Tathagatas. They are vast, compassionate, profound and extremely rare, universally benefiting beings who are bewildered and lost. They are truly like a ferry across the vast ocean, the light of sun and moon in the darkness, and the food and drink for the starved.

If good men, good women and all sentient beings of the world resolve to cultivate the Bodhi mind, uphold, recite, wear or have this Dharani with them, they will receive limitless blessings and meritorious virtues and be eternally liberated from the sufferings of all evil destinies. All their evil karma accumulated from beginningless time over billions of kalpas will be completely eradicated.

If one cultivates and upholds this Dharani diligently, one will receive the blessings and initiations (Abhiseka) from all the Buddhas. One will be guarded and protected by devas and one's worldly blessings and longevity will be boundless. Such wonderful fruition and effect have been witnessed by me to be true.

I, the Emperor of China, feel pity that many of my subjects are obstinately attached to their deviant beliefs and practices without realising that such doings are wrong and sinful and will only cause them to fall into evil destinies. This is truly pitiful and sad. Hence, I command that this Sutra and Mantra be propagated to innumerable lands, as many as the grains of sand of the Ganges River. May all sentient beings receive great benefits, their lifespan lengthen, blessings multiply and together they will attain Buddhahood.

Moreover, the Buddha had vowed to extensively deliver all sentient beings; priority will

definitely be given to those who are loyal and those who are filial. Loyal officials and filial persons, born in a highly cultured and civilised country during the times of peace, will enjoy various kinds of prosperity and happiness, all because they have served their Emperor and parents to the best of their ability (in their previous existences). In addition, if they respect and revere the Triple Jewel, cultivate and accrue good deeds, then within a short time, they will ascend the Way to Enlightenment.

For those who commit evil deeds and are ignorant of mending their behaviour, their evil actions will get worse day by day. They accumulate great evil karma and are resigned to their own deterioration like people who have bathed in paint, truly difficult to be cleansed indeed. Having fallen into the dark phase, what causes could release them from the world of transmigration? If they can change for the better and cultivate based on this Dharma-door (uphold and recite this Dharani), then they will be able to transcend the uncountable kalpas of cycles of rebirth.

**6th Lunar Month, 9th Year of Yong Le
Ming Dynasty 1411 AD**

Preface 2

(Narrated by Sramana Zhi Jing of the Ding Jue Monastery of the Tang Dynasty)

The origin of the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra is as described below. In the first year of Yi Feng (676 AD) of the Tang dynasty, a Brahmin monk named Buddhapala came to China from India. On arriving at the Wu Tai Mountain in China, he prostrated himself on his knees and elbows on the ground and bowed to the mountain saying, "After the Maha Parinirvana of the Buddha, many of the saints retreated from this world except Mahasattva Manjushri who still dwells in this mountain to deliver beings across and instruct the Bodhisattvas. I, Buddhapala, regret to have been born during the period of the eight adversities, and as such, am not able to see your saintly countenance. Travelling from afar across rivers and deserts, I have come specially to pay homage and reverence, appealing to Your Great Compassion and Kindness to respond and show me Your saintly countenance!"

Having said that, he was overcome with emotion and his tears fell like rain as he bowed to the mountain. When he lifted his head after bowing, he suddenly saw an old man coming out from the mountain. Speaking in the Brahmin language, the old man said to Buddhapala, "Dharma Master, you have a strong admiration for the Way, searching for the whereabouts of the saints. Enduring the toil and pain of a long arduous journey, you have come from afar to look for Their vestiges. However, many of the living beings in China have committed many evil deeds. Even many of those who have left the home-life have also broken their precepts. The only Sutra that can help to eliminate all the evil karma of sentient beings is the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra. I wonder whether you, Dharma Master, have brought it along?"

Buddhapala replied, "I have come solely with the intention to pay homage and offer reverence and hence have not brought this Sutra along."

The old man said, "Since you do not bring the Sutra, why do you come at all? What good is there when you come empty-handed? Even if you see Manjushri Bodhisattva, how would you recognise Him? You should return to the western country (India), and bring the Sutra back here for circulation. That would be similar to paying homage to all Saints universally, extensively benefiting all sentient beings, delivering beings of the under world and repaying the kindness of the Buddhas. Should you, Master, bring the Sutra here, I will definitely show you the whereabouts of Manjushri Bodhisattva !"

Buddhapala was delighted when he heard this. Controlling his tears, he bowed sincerely to the old man. When he lifted his head, the old man had disappeared. He was astonished and became even more sincere in his practice. Being mindful of Manjushri Bodhisattva, he returned to India to get the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra.

In the second year of Yong Chun (683 AD), Buddhapala returned to the capital city of Xian and reported the entire incident to the Emperor. The Emperor kept the Sutra in the palace, and then invited Tripitaka Dharma Master Divakara and ordered the Si Bin Monastery's public relations official Du Xing Yi and others to translate the Sutra together. After the translation was completed, the Emperor presented thirty bolts of brocade to Buddhapala but the translated Sutra was not allowed to be taken out of the palace.

Buddhapala then went to see the Emperor. Crying miserably, he pleaded, "I, a poor monk, have risked my life to carry out the mission entrusted (by the Bodhisattva) to bring the Sutra from afar, hoping to universally deliver all sentient beings from their sufferings and miseries. I have no desire for wealth or fame. I appeal to Your Majesty to circulate the Sutra, so that all sentient beings can share its benefits."

Hence, the Emperor returned the original Sanskrit text to Buddhapala and kept the translated text for himself. Having obtained the original Sanskrit text, Buddhapala went to the Xi Ming Monastery where he found a Chinese monk named Shun Zhen, who was very proficient in the Sanskrit language. Buddhapala then sought the permission of the Emperor to translate the Sutra again. The Emperor granted his request. So Buddhapala, Shun Zhen and other great learned monks did the translation together. Thereafter, Buddhapala took the original Sanskrit text with him into the Wu Tai Mountain and was never seen again. Now although both translated versions are widely circulated, there are some minor differences in the phrases of the two versions. It is hoped that readers will take note.

In the third year of Chui Gong (687 AD), I, Zhi Jing, the abbot of the Ding Jue Monastery stopped at the Wei Guo Dong Monastery in the capital city of Shendu (i.e. Luoyang) to pay my respects personally to the Tripitaka Dharma Master Divakara. I enquired about the details of Buddhapala's visit and the actual happenings. What I was

told, were as stated above. I then asked the Tripitaka Dharma Master to teach me the divine Dharani. Dharma Master Divakara then transmitted the Sanskrit text, orally. After 14 days, I was taught the complete text, every phrase in the correct Sanskrit tone without any mistakes. This was then compared with the earlier translated Sanskrit text. All omissions and mistakes were corrected and revised. An annotation stating "The Latest Alternative Version" was also written at the beginning of this Mantra, the phrases of which were slightly different from that translated by Du Xing Yi. Once this newly revised Mantra was ascertained to be free of mistakes, the correct phonetics were then added to enable future students to learn its correct pronunciation.

In the eighth lunar month of the first year of Yong Chang (689 AD), at the Da Jing Ai Monastery, I personally met the Senior Monk, Dharma Master Cheng of the Xi Ming Monastery. Again, I asked about Buddhapala's visit and the incident related to me was similar to the one stated above. I had also met the translator of the Sutra, Dharma Master Shun Zhen who was then residing at the Xi Ming Monastery.

This Sutra has the inconceivable power to liberate all sentient beings of this world and the under world. In case any student is not aware of this, the whole incident is recorded in detail for their reference.

Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Sutra

(Translated version of Master Buddhapala during the Tang Dynasty)

Thus I have heard, at one time, the Bhagavan (World Honoured One) was dwelling in the city of Shravasti at the Jeta Grove, in the Garden of the Benefactor of Orphans and the Solitary (Ananthapindada), together with his regular disciples of twelve hundred and fifty great Bhikshus and twelve thousand Maha Bodhisattvas Sangha in all.

At that time the devas in Trayastrimsa Heaven were also having a gathering in the Good Dharma Hall. Among them was a devaputra by the name of Susthita who, together with the other great devaputras, was frolicking in the garden and courtyard, enjoying the supremely wonderful bliss of heavenly life. Surrounded by devis they were extremely happy - singing, dancing and entertaining themselves.

Soon after nightfall, Devaputra Susthita suddenly heard a voice in space saying, "Devaputra Susthita, you have only seven days left to live. After death, you will be reborn in Jambu-dvipa (Earth) as an animal for seven successive lives. Then you will fall into the hells to undergo more sufferings, Only after fulfilling your karmic retribution

will you be reborn in the human realm, but to a humble and destitute family; while in the mother's womb you will be without eyes and be born blind."

On hearing this, Devaputra Susthita was so terrified that his hair stood on end. Tormented and distressed, he rushed over to the palace of Lord Sakra. Bursting into tears and not knowing what else to do, he prostrated himself at the feet of Lord Sakra, telling Lord Sakra of what had happened.

"As I was enjoying the frolic of dance and songs with the heavenly devis, I suddenly heard a voice in space telling me that I had only seven days left, and that I would fall into Jambu-dvipa after death, remaining there in the animal realm for seven successive lives. Following that, I would fall into the various hells to endure greater sufferings. Only after my karmic retribution had been fulfilled would I be reborn as a human, and even then I would be born without eyes in a poor and disreputable family. Lord of Heaven, how can I escape from such sufferings?"

On hearing Devaputra Susthita's tearful appeal, Lord Sakra was greatly astonished and thought to himself, "In what seven successive evil paths and forms will Devaputra Susthita undergo?"

Lord Sakra immediately calmed his mind to enter Samadhi and made careful observations. Instantly, he saw that Susthita would undergo seven successive evil paths in the forms of a pig, dog, jackal, monkey, python, crow and vulture, all feeding on filth and putrescence. Having seen the seven future rebirth forms of Devaputra Susthita, Lord Sakra was shattered and was filled with great sorrow, but could not think of any way to help Susthita. He felt that only the Tathagata, Arhat, Samyak-sambuddha could save Susthita from falling into the great sufferings of evil destinies.

Thus, soon after nightfall that very day, Lord Sakra prepared various types of flower wreaths, perfume and incense. Adorning himself with fine deva garments and bearing these offerings, Lord Sakra made his way to the garden of Anathapindada, abode of the World Honoured One. Upon arrival, Lord Sakra first prostrated himself at the Buddha's feet in reverence, then circumambulated the Buddha seven times clockwise in worship, before laying out his great puja (offerings). Kneeling in front of the Buddha, Lord Sakra described the future destiny of Devaputra Susthita who would soon fall into the evil paths with seven successive rebirths in the animal realm with details of his subsequent retribution. Instantly, the usnisa (crown of the head) of the Tathagata radiated multiple rays of light, illuminating the world in all ten directions - the light then returned, circling the Buddha three times before entering His mouth. Then the Buddha smiled and said to Lord Sakra, "Lord of Heaven, there is a Dharani known as the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani. It can purify all evil paths, completely eliminating all sufferings of birth and death. It can also liberate all miseries and sufferings of beings in the realms of hell, King Yama and animal, destroy all the hells, and transfer sentient beings onto the virtuous path."

"Lord of Heaven, if one hears this Usnisa Vijaya Dharani once, all the bad karma incurred from his previous lives that should cause him to fall into hells will be destroyed

altogether. He will instead acquire a fine and pure body, Wherever he is reborn, he will clearly remember the Dharani - from one Buddhaland to another, from one heavenly realm to another heavenly realm. Indeed, throughout the Trayastrimsa Heavens, wherever he is reborn, he will not forget."

"Lord of Heaven, if someone at death's door recalls this divine Dharani, even for just a moment, his lifespan will be extended and he will acquire purification of body, speech and mind. Without suffering any physical pain and in accordance with his meritorious deeds, he will enjoy tranquility everywhere. Receiving blessings from all the Tathagatas, and constantly guarded by devas and protected by Bodhisattvas, he will be honoured and respected by people, and all his evil hindrances will be eradicated."

"Lord of Heaven, if someone can sincerely read or recite this Dharani even for a short period of time, all his karmic retribution which would lead him to suffer in the hells, the animal realm, the realm of King Yama and the hungry ghost realm, will be completely destroyed and eradicated without leaving any trace. He will be free to go to any of the Buddhas' Pure Lands and heavenly palaces; all gateways leading to the Bodhisattvas' abode are open to him unobstructed."

After hearing the above discourse, Lord Sakra immediately appealed to the Buddha, "For the sake of all sentient beings, may the World Honoured One kindly give a discourse on how one's lifespan can be lengthened."

The Buddha was aware of Lord Sakra's intention and his eagerness to hear His discourse on this Dharani and so immediately proclaimed the Mantra thus:

Namo Bhagavate Trailokya Prativiśiṣṭāya Buddhāya Bhagavate.
Tadyathā, Om, Viśuddhaya Viśuddhaya, Asama-sama
Samantāvabhāsa-spharāṇa Gati Gahana Svabhāva Viśuddhe,
Abhiṣiṅcatu Mām. Sugata Vara Vacana Amṛta Abhiṣkai Mahā
Mantra-padaī. Āhara Āhara Āyuh Saṃ-dhāraṇi. Śodhaya Śodhaya
Gagana Viśuddhe. Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Viśuddhe Sahasra-raśmi Saṃ-
codite. Sarva Tathāgata Avalokani Ṣaṭ-pāramitā-paripūraṇi. Sarva
Tathāgata Mati Daśa-bhūmi Prati-ṣṭhite. Sarva Tathāgata Hṛdaya
Adhiṣṭhānādhiṣṭhita Mahā-mudre. Vajra Kāya Saṃ-hatana Viśuddhe.
Sarvāvaraṇa Apāya-durgati Pari Viśuddhe, Prati-nivartaya Āyuh
Śuddhe. Samaya Adhiṣṭhite. Maṇi Maṇi Mahā Maṇi. Tathatā Bhūta-
koṭi Pariśuddhe. Viśphuṭa Buddhi Śuddhe. Jaya Jaya, Vijaya Vijaya.
Smara Smara, Sarva Buddha Adhiṣṭhita Śuddhe, Vajri Vajragarbhe
Vajram Bhāvatu Mama Śarīraṃ. Sarva Sattvānām Ca Kāya Pari
Viśuddhe. Sarva Gati Pariśuddhe. Sarva Tathāgata Siṅca Me
Samāśvāsayantu. Sarva Tathāgata Samāśvāsa Adhiṣṭhite. Buddhya
Buddhya, Vibuddhya Vibuddhya. Bodhaya Bodhaya, Vibodhaya
Vibodhaya Samanta Pariśuddhe. Sarva Tathāgata Hṛdaya
Adhiṣṭhānādhiṣṭhita Mahā-mudre Svāhā.

(This Usnisa Vijaya Dharani is the improved version with some additions to the original Sanskrit transliteration.)

Then the Buddha told Lord Sakra, "The above Mantra is known as the '**Purifying All Evil Paths' Usnisa Vijaya Dharani**'. It can eliminate all evil karmic hindrances and eradicate the suffering of all evil paths."

"Lord of Heaven, this great Dharani is proclaimed together by Buddhas as numerous as eighty-eight kotis (hundred million) of the grains of sand of the Ganges River. All Buddhas rejoice and uphold this Dharani that is verified by the wisdom seal of the Maha Vairocana Tathagata. This is because the Dharani is proclaimed to remove all sufferings borne by beings in the evil paths, to liberate them from painful retribution in hell, animal and King Yama's realms; to deliver beings facing immediate danger of falling into the sea of birth and death (samsara); to assist helpless beings with short lifespans and poor fortune and to deliver beings who like to commit all kinds of evil deeds. Moreover, because of Its dwelling and being upheld in the Jambu-dvipa world, the power manifested by this Dharani would cause all beings in hells and other evil realms; those with poor fortune and revolving in the cycles of birth and death; those not believing in the existence of good and evil deeds and are deviated from the proper path, to attain deliverance."

Again Buddha reminded Lord Sakra, "I now entrust this divine Dharani to you. You should in turn transmit it to Devaputra Susthita. In addition, you yourself should receive and uphold it, recite, contemplate and treasure it, memorise and revere it. This Dharani Mudra should be widely proclaimed to all beings in the Jambu-dvipa world. I also entrust this to you, for the benefit of all heavenly beings, that this Dharani Mudra should be proclaimed. Lord of Heaven, you should diligently uphold and protect it, never letting it to be forgotten or lost."

"Lord of Heaven, if someone hears this Dharani even for just a moment, he will not undergo karmic retribution from the evil karma and severe hindrances accumulated from thousands of kalpas ago, that would otherwise cause him to revolve in the cycles of birth and death - in all kinds of life forms in the evil paths - hell, hungry ghost, animal, realm of King Yama, Asuras, Yaksha, Raksasa, ghosts and spirits, Putana, Kataputana, Apasmara, mosquitoes, gnats, tortoises, dogs, pythons, birds, ferocious animals, crawling creatures and even ants and other life forms. Owing to the merits accrued from hearing for a moment this Dharani, once this very life is over, he will be reborn in the Buddhalands, together with all the Buddhas and Ekajati-pratibaddha Bodhisattvas, or in a distinguished Brahmin or Ksatriya family, or in some other wealthy and reputable family. Lord of Heaven, this man can be reborn in one of the above-mentioned prosperous and reputable families simply because he has heard this Dharani, and hence be reborn in a pure place."

"Lord of Heaven, even acquiring the most victorious Bodhimanda is a result of praising the meritorious virtues of this Dharani. Hence, this Dharani is also known as the Auspicious Dharani, which can purify all evil paths. This Usnisa Vijaya Dharani is like a Treasury of Sun Mani Pearl - pure and flawless, clear as space, its brilliance illuminating

and all-pervading. If any beings uphold this Dharani, likewise will they be bright and pure. This Dharani is similar to the Jambunada gold -bright, pure and soft, can not be tainted by filth and well-liked by all who see it. Lord of Heaven, beings who uphold this Dharani are just as pure. By virtue of this pure practice, they will be reborn in the good paths."

"Lord of Heaven, where this Dharani dwells, if it is written for distribution, propagated, received and upheld, read and recited, heard and revered, this will cause all evil paths to be purified; miseries and sufferings in all hells will be completely eradicated."

Buddha again told Lord Sakra cautiously, "If someone could write this Dharani and place It on the top of a tall banner, high mountain or in a tall building or even keep It in a stupa; Lord of Heaven! If there are bhiksus or bhiksunis, upasakas or upasikas, laymen or laywomen who have seen this Dharani atop the above structures; or if the shadows of these structures should fall on beings who come near to the structures, or particles of dust from the written Dharani are blown onto their bodies; Lord of Heaven! Should the accumulated evil karma of these beings cause them to fall into the evil paths such as realms of hell, animal, King Yama, hungry ghost, Asura and others, they will all be spared from the evil paths, and they will not be tainted with filth and defilement. Lord of Heaven! Instead, all Buddhas will bestow predictions (Vyakamna) onto these beings who will never regress from the path to Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi (complete enlightenment)."

"Lord of Heaven, let alone if one makes various offerings of flower wreaths, perfumes, incense, banners and flags, canopies decorated with gems, clothing, necklaces of precious stones, etc., to adorn and honour this Dharani; and at major routes, if one builds special stupas to house this Dharani, then most respectfully with palms together circumambulates the pagoda, bowing and taking refuge, Lord of Heaven, those who make such offerings are called the great Mahasattvas, Buddha's true disciples, and the pillars of Dharma. Such stupas will be regarded as the Tathagata's complete body sharira-stupa"

At that time, in the early part of the night, the ruler of the Hell Realm - King Yama, came to the abode of the Buddha. First, using various deva garments, beautiful flowers, perfumes and other adornments, he made offerings to the Buddha, then circumambulated the Buddha seven times before prostrating himself at the feet of the Buddha in reverence, saying, "I heard that the Tathagata was giving a discourse in praise of upholding the powerful Dharani; I have come with the intention to learn and cultivate it. I shall constantly guard and protect those who uphold, read and recite this powerful Dharani, not allowing them to fall into hell because they have followed the teachings of the Tathagata."

At this time, the four Guardians of the World - the Catur-maharajas (Four Heavenly Kings) circumambulated the Buddha three times, and most respectfully said, "World Honoured One, may the Tathagata kindly explain in detail the way to uphold this Dharani."

The Buddha then told the Four Heavenly Kings, "Please listen attentively, for your benefit as well as for the benefit of all beings with short lifespans, I will now explain the method to uphold this Dharani. On a full-moon day - the 15th day of the lunar month, one should first bathe oneself and put on new clean clothes, uphold the profound precepts and recite this Dharani 1000 times. This will cause one to lengthen one's lifespan, and be permanently free from the sufferings of illness; all one's karmic hindrances will be completely eradicated, One will also be liberated from suffering in hell. If birds, animals and other sentient beings hear this Dharani once, they will never again be reborn in these impure and gross body forms once their lives have ended."

The Buddha continued, "If someone suffering from a serious disease hears this Dharani, he will be free of the disease. All other illnesses will also be eradicated, so too will the evil karma that will cause him to fall into the evil paths. He will be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss after the end of his life. From then onwards he will no longer be born from the womb. Instead, wherever he is reborn, he will be born transformed from the lotus flower and would always remember and uphold this Dharani and gain knowledge of his past lives."

The Buddha added, "If someone has committed all the severe evil deeds before his death, according to his sinful deeds, he ought to fall into one of these realms of hell, animals, King Yama or hungry ghosts, or even into the big Avici Hells, or be reborn as an aquatic creature, or in one of the many forms of birds and animals. If someone could obtain part of the skeleton of the deceased, and holding a fistful of soil, chant this Dharani 21 times before scattering the soil over the bones, then the deceased will be reborn in heaven."

The Buddha further added, "If one can chant this Dharani 21 times daily, one is worthy of accepting all the immense worldly offerings and will be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss after one's death. If one chants this Dharani constantly, one will attain Maha Parinirvana and be able to lengthen one's lifespan besides enjoying the most extraordinary bliss, After one's life is over, one will be reborn in any of the wonderful Buddhalands, in constant company of the Buddhas. All Tathagatas will always give discourses on the profound and wonderful truth of Dharma and all World Honoured Ones will bestow predictions of enlightenment upon one. The light illuminating from one's body will pervade all Buddhalands"

The Buddha further explained, "To recite this Dharani, one should first, in front of the Buddha's image, use some clean soil to construct a square mandala, the size according to one's wish. On top of the mandala one should spread different kinds of grass, flowers and burn different kinds of quality incense. Then kneeling down with the right knee on the floor, mindfully reciting the Buddha's name and with the hands in the Mudrani symbol, (i.e. each hand bending the forefinger and pressing it down with the thumb and placing both palms together before the chest) in reverence, one should recite this Dharani 108 times. The showers of flowers would rain down from the clouds and would thus be universally made as offerings to Buddhas as numerous as the grains of sand of eighty-eight million Ganges Rivers. These Buddhas will simultaneously praise, "Excellent! Rare indeed! A Buddha's true disciple!" One will instantly attain Unobstructed Wisdom

Samadhi and the Great Bodhi Mind Adorned Samadhi. Thus is the way to uphold this Dharani."

The Buddha again exhorted Lord Sakra, saying, "Lord of Heaven, the Tathagata uses this expedient means to deliver beings who would otherwise have fallen into hells; to purify all evil paths and to lengthen the lifespans of those who uphold this Dharani. Lord of Heaven, please go back and transmit this Dharani to Devaputra Susthita. After seven days, come to see me with Devaputra Susthita."

Thus, at the abode of the World Honoured One, the Lord of Heaven respectfully received this Dharani practice and returned to his heavenly palace to convey it to Devaputra Susthita.

Having received this Dharani, Devaputra Susthita kept to the practice as instructed for six days and six nights, after which all his wishes were completely fulfilled. The karma which should have led him to suffer in all the evil paths were all eradicated. He would remain on the Bodhi Path and increase his lifespan for an immeasurable period of time. Thus, he was extremely delighted, exclaiming aloud in praise, "Extraordinary Tathagata! What a rare and wonderful Dharma! Its efficacy explicitly verified! Rare indeed! Truly I have thus obtained deliverance!"

When the seven days were over, Lord Sakra brought Devaputra Susthita, together with other heavenly beings, respectfully bearing excellent and wonderful adornment of flower-wreaths, perfumes, incense, jewelled banners, canopies decorated with gemstones, deva-garments and garlands of precious stones, approached Buddha's abode and presented their grand offerings. Using heavenly garments and various garlands of precious stones to make offerings to the World Honoured One, they then respectfully circumambulated the Buddha a hundred thousand times, paid homage to the Buddha, then happily took their seats and listened to the Buddha preach the Dharma.

The World Honoured One then extended his golden arm and touched the crown of Devaputra Susthita, to whom He not only preached the Dharma but bestowed a prediction of Devaputra Susthita's attainment to Bodhi. Finally, the Buddha said, "This Sutra shall be known as the 'Purifying All Evil Paths' Usnisa Vijaya Dharani'. You should diligently uphold it."

On hearing this Dharma, the entire assembly was extremely happy. They faithfully accepted and respectfully practised it.

Mantra and Sutra of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani
that Eradicates Karmic Obstruction
(Extracted from the Translated version of Tripitaka Master
Divakara during the Tang Dynasty)

At that time, the usnisa (crown of head) of the Tathagata instantly radiated multiple rays of light, illuminating the world in all ten directions. The light rays radiated five colours - green, red, yellow, white and black. The brightness was enormous and full of radiance. The light then shone in the clockwise direction and returned to shine at the abode of Buddha, circling Him three times before entering His mouth. After Buddha gathered the rays of light, He smiled and said to Lord Sakra, "Lord of Heaven, please listen attentively. During the infinite asamkhyeya eons ago, there was a Buddha named Vipasyin Tathagata, Arhat, Samyak-sambuddha, Gifted in Knowledge and Conduct, Well-gone One, Knower of the Worlds, Unsurpassable Knight, Taming Hero, Teacher of Gods and People, Awakened One and World Honoured One, complete with ten epithets of a Buddha. Vipasyin Buddha, after His affinity to deliver beings in the world had ended, entered Maha Parinirvana. During His Dharma Image Age, there was a country called Varanasi. In the country, there was a Brahmin who passed away after his wife gave birth to a son. This child depended solely on his mother for his upbringing. When he grew up, he became a farmer. They were so poor that his mother still had to go around begging food for him.

At one time, his mother failed to obtain food and it was well past his mealtime. The son became very angry and hated his mother for causing him hunger and thirst. With feelings of anger, he continuously and accusingly questioned while waiting for his mother, "What has happened today that Mother still hasn't brought me my food?" He then cursed angrily, "My mother is not even fit to be compared to an animal. I know that the mothers of pigs, dogs, jackals, monkeys, pythons, crows and vultures take care of their young with such love and care, never letting the young ones be starved or thirsty, and not even straying away for a while from their young ones. Why hasn't my mother come? I am so hungry and thirsty and yet she hasn't even brought the food!"

Not long after he had these accusing thoughts, his mother managed to beg for some food and hurried back to the farm. She consoled the son. Just as they were sitting down to have the meal, a pratyekabuddha suddenly appeared in the form of a bhiksu, and flew in the sky from the south to the northern direction. The boy saw this strange phenomenon and was full of respect and admiration. He immediately stood up and putting his palms together, prostrated and requested the pratyekabuddha to descend. The pratyekabuddha accepted his request. The boy excitedly and happily set up a seat from white cogongrass, presented wonderful flowers that were clean and pure, and also with both hands, offered part of his food to the pratyekabuddha respectfully. After the meal, the bhiksu proclaimed the core teaching of Buddha Dharma to him and he was happy. Owing to this cause and affinity, the boy later became a monk and was appointed as the monk who managed miscellaneous matters in the temple.

At that time, there was a Brahmin who built a temple for the Sangha and there was a

donor who offered the Sangha a lot of butter and fine food. Coincidentally, there were many travelling monks who were having their meals in the temple at that time. When the monk who managed miscellaneous matters saw the situation, his feelings of greed and hatred arose. He regarded those travelling monks as pests and troublemakers, and kept the delicacies, not allowing them to eat.

"These offerings were made by the donor to the existing Sangha. Why did you keep the offerings and not let anyone eat them?", asked one travelling monk. The monk who managed miscellaneous matters was extremely irritated and he lost his temper, "All you travelling monks, why don't you just eat excrement and drink urine? Why must you ask and look for butter and fine food? Have your eyes gone blind? Did you see me hide and keep the delicacies?"

The Buddha told Lord Sakra, "The son of the Brahmin at that time is now Devaputra Susthita. Because he had made comparisons of his mother to animals with hatred, he has to continuously undergo seven lives in the form of animals now. And because when he was the monk who managed miscellaneous matters in the temple, he uttered filthy words of eating excrement and drinking urine, the karmic retribution would be that he would always eat food that was filthy. Owing to his greed for the food offered to the Sangha, he would therefore undergo the sufferings of hell. As a result of cursing the Sangha as blind, he would suffer the retribution of having no eyes. For seven hundred lives, he would always be blind and would live in darkness, and would experience great sufferings.

Lord of Heaven! You have to be aware that these offensive karma have a cause, and will definitely have an effect. They will never be destroyed. Secondly, Lord of Heaven! Devaputra Susthita can enjoy the bliss of heavenly life because he made offerings to the pratyekabuddha, set up a seat and presented fragrant flowers, respectfully shared his food and listened to the Buddha Dharma. Thus, he now enjoys the heavenly blessings. After countless kalpas, he will always enjoy great, unsurpassed and wonderful happiness. Also, he looked up and resolved his mind with respect and prostrated himself when the pratyekabuddha flew above in the sky. Owing to this merit and virtue, he heard the sound of god in space informing him in advance of his retribution. That god is actually the Palace God of Devaputra Susthita!"

The Tang Dynasty Records of Buddhapala in Wu Tai Mountain

(Volume 2 of Records of high Priests in the Song Dynasty)

In midyear Da Li (770 AD) during the Tang dynasty, Dharma Master Fa Zhao, a bhiksu from the Yun Feng Monastery in Nanfei, went to Wu Tai Mountain to pay respects to the Vajra Cave with the hope of meeting Manjushri Bodhisattva. He bowed continuously until late at night and still failed to see the sagely countenance of Manjushri Bodhisattva. Blaming his own deep karmic obstructions, he prostrated himself on the ground and sincerely repented.

Suddenly, he saw a monk, who was about seven feet tall and spoke fluent Sanskrit in a sonorous tone. The monk introduced himself as Buddhapala and asked Fa Zhao, "Dharma Master, you have blamed yourself with such grief and persistence. May I know what is it that you wish to seek?"

Fa Zhao answered, "I wish to meet Manjushri Bodhisattva !"

Buddhapala replied, "If your intention and determination are strong enough, and can bring forth a truly sincere mind, please take off your shoes and leave them on the board. The sagely countenance of Manjushri Bodhisattva will appear in front of you."

Fa Zhao placed his shoes as instructed. Not long after closing his eyes, he found himself in the Vajra Cave and saw a monastery with an entrance labelled 'Vajra Prajna Monastery'. The words written on the label were straight, bold and they glittered brightly. The monastery was adorned with various precious jewels, their names and types were too many to mention. There were numerous raised pavilions and palaces everywhere, within which were screens arranged closely. Sounds of tinkling bells could also be heard.

There were collections of secret Tripitakas at about two hundred locations, which comprised "Vajra Prajna" and all other Sutras and Dharma. The people there had huge physique, unlike the body size that was normally seen.

The countenance of Manjushri Bodhisattva was very dignified and solemn. Manjushri Bodhisattva had many followers, and he also expressed his regards and concerns for Fa Zhao. After Fa Zhao had his tea, Buddhapala guided him out of Vajra Cave. Fa Zhao begged to remain in the monastery, but Buddhapala refused him. Before his departure, Fa Zhao was advised and encouraged to cultivate diligently by Buddhapala. If Fa Zhao could return, he would be allowed to stay in the monastery. When Fa Zhao was back on the board to put on his shoes, he turned around but Buddhapala was already nowhere to be seen.

Efficacious Records of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani (Narrated by Wu Che, the Emperor's Court Councillor and Assistant)

In the winter of the 26th year of Kai Yuan (738 AD) in Shen Du, there was a senior government official called Zhang Yi, who had been very filial to his parents from young. After his parents passed away, he was very much afraid that they had fallen into the evil paths. He sincerely wanted to repay their kindness in bringing him up and had always thought of saving them. Hence, he made a vow and wholeheartedly went into the hills to uphold the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani hoping to witness his late parents reborn in a peaceful and happy place. Day and night he diligently recited the Dharani, continuously and earnestly seeking response for six years. During this time, he never saw his parents. He suspected that the Mantra was not effective and began to have doubts over its efficacy. He lost his faith and just as he was about to stop reciting the Mantra, an old man with a

very distinctive countenance suddenly appeared before him, saying, "It is not that the Mantra is not efficacious, nor is it that you have not been sincere in your recitation, but it has been a long time since the Buddha attained nirvana, so the translated text that you have now is full of errors, and many sentences in the Mantra have been left out, therefore causing it to lose its efficacy"

The old man immediately transmitted the Dharani verbally so that Zhang Yi could follow his verbal rhyme and make a copy of it. "Recite the Dharani according to this copy for seven days, and you will definitely see your late parents and know their place of rebirth," the old man told him. Very respectfully, Zhang Yi bowed to offer reverence, but when he looked up, the old man was nowhere to be found.

"Who was the wise sage that appeared to guide me?" he thought to himself. He was very surprised, but became even more sincere and concentrated all his attention towards upholding and reciting the version taught by the old man. At the beginning of the sixth day, his late parents appeared before him; they were still as loving as they had been when they were alive. Hugging and crying, they were both happy and sad, completely overcome with emotion, at a meeting of beings between the two realms (spiritual and human). His father told Zhang Yi, "After death, we fell into the big hell and suffered all types of pain and miseries. In these past few years, the transference of merits from your sincere and whole-hearted recitation of the Mantra has gradually reduced our sufferings. Only recently were we reborn in heaven. Now we have come from the higher realm to see you." Although the powerful aura radiating from their celestial bodies caused them to look rather different, their original appearance could still be recognised. The father clearly explained the causes and conditions of their present existence, just as when he was alive.

When any filial son hears of this miraculous incident, how could he not place his heart in this saintly teaching? However, what good will there be in indulging in the six desires under the delusion of seeking pleasure and enjoyment? Moreover, the story of how the Buddha's great disciple Maudgalyayana saved his mother from the realm of hungry ghost was all recorded in the Sutras. Now Official Zhang's sincerity, too, had such efficacious results.

Later, a monk who recited this divine Dharani transmitted that if one recited this Dharani in the presence of relics, one would experience many levels of realms. This monk came to Dongdu and all these efficacious incidents were recorded and were made known to many people. Many Buddhist followers propagated and spread this information.

In mid-April in the 3rd year of Chang Qing (823 AD), the retired officer in charge of palace horses of the Fengtian District, Yang Qiu Man, moved back to Puban and lived in his old house at Stone Lane in the eastern side of the city. He upheld Buddhapala's version of the Usnisa Vijaya Dharani as his regular recitation for 15 years, and had never laxed in his practice. Arriving back at Puban for several months, one night he dreamt of a divine being with a very unique appearance, clad in a full suit of armour, saying, "Since you are so sincere in upholding this Dharani, why don't you pay a visit to a monk of the

Jing Fu Monastery at the Eastern Lane who upholds this practice? He has the efficacious version of the Dharani and the merit accrued from upholding this version is nine times more superior to yours."

Having heard that, Yang suddenly awoke and found himself drenched in sweat. The next day, he visited the temple especially to seek out the monk. He had to go back there over several days before he finally met the monk, whose Dharma name was Yi Zui. He was very earnest in upholding and reciting this divine Mantra. He had many followers, who came from far and near. When he enquired about the reason of Yang's visit, Yang told the monk of his dream. The monk said, "This is truly remarkable! I have a copy of the Sanskrit text, which no one knows about. Since you have been directed here by a divine being, how can I remain so selfish?"

Immediately Bhiksu Yi Zui asked his disciple to take out the Sanskrit text from his bamboo case and taught Yang the Mantra. Yang then asked his permission to take the Mantra text home to compare with his copy of Buddhapala's text. Only then did Yang realise that Buddhapala's version did have some phrases missing. From then onwards, he upheld and recited the Mantra according to the new version and found that its efficacy was so much different from before. The bhiksu also passed over two volumes of Usnisa Vijaya Dharani Yogakalpa Sutra. Since then, Yang realised that this saintly teaching had a clear fixed method of upholding and reciting the Dharani and that one cannot do so according to whims and fancies. Hence, this particular cause and affinity was recorded for the reference of fellow cultivators.

Glossary

Abhiseka. The method of initiation applied by the School of Vajrayana. The practice is meant to render protection and great compassion towards the disciples, so that they could attain the highest fruition of Bodhi. When one receives the initiation from all the Buddhas, one will gain perfect merits and virtues. There are many methods of initiation.

Alaya Consciousness. Also called 'store consciousness', 'eighth consciousness', or 'karma repository'. All karma created in the present and previous lifetimes is stored here. The alaya consciousness is regarded as that which undergoes the cycle of birth and death. All the actions and experiences of life that take place through the first seven consciousness are accumulated as karma in this alaya consciousness, which at the same time exerts an influence on the workings of the seven consciousness. It is the only consciousness that transmigrates and is the first to arrive at conception and the last to leave at death.

Amitabha Buddha. The word Amitabha is used to represent 'Amitabha' (infinite light) and 'Amitayus' (infinite life). Presides over the Western Pure Land or Sukhavati, where anyone can be reborn through utterly sincere and single-minded recitation of his name, particularly at the time of death. See also: Land of Ultimate Bliss.

Amitayus Tathagata. See Amitabha Buddha.

Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. The utmost, proper and equal Enlightenment. The highest enlightenment, realised by Buddhas.

Apasmara. One of the fifteen malevolent demons which disturbs young children.

Arhat. One of the fruition of the path of cultivation. Arhats have attained the cessation of involuntary physical birth and death. The word has three meanings, which are as follows:

- 1) Worthy of offerings.
- 2) Killer of thieves. Arhats have killed the thieves of afflictions and outflows.
- 3) Without birth. An Arhat dwells in the forbearance of the non-arising of dharmas. They have ended birth and death of the body.

Asamkhyeyas of eons. Asamkhyeya is a Sanskrit word that means "uncountable". Eon is a translation of the Sanskrit term kalpa.

1 kalpa = 139,600 years

1,000 kalpas = 1 small kalpa

20 small kalpas = 1 middle-sized kalpa

4 middle-sized kalpas = 1 great kalpa

Asura. Spirits or titanic demons. There are four classes named according to their manner of rebirth: egg-born, womb-born, transformation-born and spawn or water-born. Generally, their abode is in the ocean, north of Mount Sumeru.

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva. The Bodhisattva of great compassion who regards the sounds of the world. Also known as 'Guanyin Bodhisattva' or 'Guanshiyin Bodhisattva'.

Avici Hell. Avici is a Sanskrit term that means "relentless" or "unintermittent". There are many relentless hells, but only the most severe one is called Avici.

Bhagavan. One of the ten titles that all Buddhas have. It means "World Honoured One".

Bhiksu. A fully ordained (having received 250 precepts) Buddhist monk. Bhiksu is a Sanskrit word that has three meanings:

- 1) mendicant;
- 2) frightener of Mara (the demon king); and
- 3) destroyer of evil.

Bhiksuni. A fully ordained (having received 348 precepts) Buddhist nun. Bhiksuni has the same three meanings as Bhiksu.

Bodhi. Enlightenment.

Bodhimanda. A place where enlightenment is sought and attained; a Way place.

Bodhi Path. See Way to Enlightenment.

Bodhi resolve. A resolve to seek enlightenment by cultivating the spiritual path.

Bodhisattva. An enlightened being who does not enter Nirvana but chooses instead to remain in the world and save living beings.

Brahmin. A Brahman, member of the highest caste in India.

Buddha. A being who has attained the Unsurpassed, Proper and Equal, Right Enlightenment. Every Buddha has Three Bodies (Dharma, Reward and Transformatation); Four Wisdoms (the Wisdom of Accomplishing What Has to Be Done; Contemplative Wisdom, Equality Wisdom and Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom); Five Eyes (the Buddha, Dharma, Flesh, Wisdom and Heavenly Eyes); and Six Spiritual Penetrations (the Penetrations of the Heavenly Eye, the Heavenly Ear, the Knowledge of Others' Thoughts, the Knowledge of Past Lives, the Complete Spirit and Freedom from Outflows). There are ten epithets that all Buddhas have (Tathagata, Arhat, Samyak-sambuddha, Gifted in Knowledge and Conduct, Well-gone One, Knower of the Worlds,

Unsurpassable Knight, Taming Hero, Teacher of Gods and People, Awakened One and World Honoured One).

Buddhahood. Enlightenment; Bodhi.

Buddhalands. Locations where Buddhas abide. As Bodhisattvas, they adorn these lands with their practices. At the level of Buddhahood, they abide in the lands and welcome beings to be reborn there.

Catur-maharajas. The Four Deva Kings of the Four Heavens: Dhrtarastra in the East, Virupaksa in the West, Virudhaka in the South and Vaisravana in the North. Cultivation. The practical application of methods taught by the Buddha that leads to enlightenment.

Deva. A celestial being; deity; god; devaputra (male heavenly being); devi (female heavenly being).

Dharani. A Sanskrit word interpreted to mean "unite and hold". Dharani, sometimes called Mantra, unites all dharmas and holds limitless meanings.

Dharma. When capitalised, as here, Dharma refers to the teachings of the Buddhas that are to be practised. When not capitalised, dharma refers to things or methods, to all entities - both physical and mental.

Dharma Body. One of the three bodies of a Buddha, it pervades all places. See also: Maha Vairocana Tathagata.

Dharma-door. An entrance to the Dharma; a method of practice leading to enlightenment.

Dharma-ending Age. The Dharma passes through the following historical periods:

- 1) The first 1,000 years is the Proper Dharma Age.
- 2) The following 1,000 years is the Dharma Image Age.
- 3) The following 10,000 years is the Dharma-ending Age.

Door. See Dharma-door.

Earth Store Bodhisattva. One of the greatest of the Bodhisattvas. He is renowned as foremost in vows. Also known as Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva.

Eight adversities. The eight conditions under which it is difficult to meet Buddhas and Bodhisattvas or hear the Dharma:

- 1) Rebirth in the hells;
- 2) Rebirth as a hungry ghost;
- 3) Rebirth as an animal;
- 4) Rebirth in Uttarakuru (a world where life is so pleasant that people have no motivation to practise the Dharma);
- 5) Rebirth in any long-life heaven (where one is also not motivated to seek the Dharma);
- 6) Rebirth with impaired faculties;
- 7) Rebirth as an intelligent, educated person in the mundane sense (as such an individual often looks down on religion and on the Dharma); and
- 8) Rebirth in the intermediate period between a Buddha and his successor (e.g. our current period).

Thus, even rebirth under 'favourable' circumstances (fourth and seventh conditions, for example) may constitute adversity with respect to the Buddha Dharma.

Ekajati-pratibadha Bodhisattva. A Bodhisattva who is one lifetime away from Buddhahood. The best known example is the Bodhisattva Maitreya.

Evil paths. Three evil paths of hells, hungry ghosts, and animals.

Evil world of five turbidities. A name given to the world we live in. The five turbidities are:

- 1) turbidity of kalpas (time);
- 2) turbidity of views;
- 3) turbidity of afflictions;
- 4) turbidity of living beings;
- 5) turbidity of lifespans.

Expedient means. Wholesome provisional methods designed for temporary use to help guide and encourage beings in their practice.

Five realms. Six realms excluding the realm of Asuras. See also: Six realms.

Five skandhas. Constituents of the entire psychophysical unit which we mistake for a personality. Skandha is a Sanskrit word meaning "heap", "pile", or "aggregate". The five skandhas are form, feelings, perception, cognition and consciousness. 'Form' belongs to the physical body; 'feelings' to the emotional reactions; and 'perception', 'cognition' and 'consciousness' to the mental realm. The skandhas are general divisions for categorising all phenomena in the conditioned world. Because they include within them all transitory, impermanent phenomena, they are the important tools for understanding the Buddhist doctrine of no self. If one analyses all aspects of what one feels to be one's 'self', one finds that all fall within the scope of the five skandhas.

Four kinds of kindness. Kindness of parents, teachers, Buddhas and the country we live in.

Four Maha Bodhisattvas. The four great Bodhisattvas namely. Manjushri (foremost in wisdom); Samantabhadra (foremost in conduct); Avalokitesvara (foremost in compassion); Ksitigarbha (foremost in vows).

Ganges' sands. In the Buddha's teachings, the sands of the Ganges River in India are used to represent an uncountable number.

Jambu-dvipa. One of the four continents of this world-system. It is located in the south, is shaped like a triangle, and is where we live.

Jambunada gold. Jambu River gold; the golden sand of the Jambu River.

Jeta-Grove. A grove of trees located within the park at Sravasti, which had been given to the Buddha by the merchant Anathapindada. The grove belonged to Prince Jeta who offered it to the Buddha. The Buddha had a lecture hall and taught many sutras there.

Kalpa. See asamkhyeyas of eons.

Karma. This Sanskrit word means "deeds" or "what is done". Karma can be good, evil or neutral and is created by the body, mouth and mind. Seeds of karma are stored in the eighth consciousness and transmigrate with it until the appropriate rewards or retributions are undergone for those deeds done.

Kataputana. Foul-smelling demon, an extremely ugly demon. Ancient Indians believed that if any member of the Ksatriya clan committed evil behaviour, he would become a demon after death living in the Lower Realm, experiencing the suffering of a hungry ghost.

King Yama. The god of the dead.

Koti. A number defines as a hundred million.

Ksatriya. Royal caste, the second caste in the Indian caste system, a member of that caste.

Land of Ultimate Bliss. The Buddhaland of Amitabha Buddha in the West created through the power of his vows that enable living beings to be reborn simply by constant mindfulness and recitation of his name. Also known as the Western Pure Land.

Lord Sakra. Lord God of the Trayastrimsa Heaven who controls the thunder, lightning, wind and rain. He is constantly in conflict with the Asuras. Also known as Indra,

Maha Parinirvana. A more emphatic term for Nirvana. Translated as "perfect quietude". See also: Nirvana.

Mahasattva. An epithet used for great Bodhisattvas.

Maha Vairocana Tathagata. The Dharma Body of Shakyamuni Buddha. Vairocana is the Dharma Body Buddha; Nishyanda is the Reward Body Buddha; and there are hundreds of thousands of Transformation Body Shakyamuni Buddhas.

Mahayana. Means "Great Vehicle" in English. Described by seven kinds of greatness, which are:

- 1) Greatness of the Dharma (the entire Buddhist canon);
- 2) Greatness of the resolve (to save oneself, to save all living beings, and to bring self and others to enlightenment);
- 3) Understanding the great storehouse (the scope of the Bodhisattva intent);
- 4) Greatness of purity (precepts);
- 5) Greatness of adornment (blessings and wisdom);
- 6) Greatness of time (as long as three great eons);
- 7) Greatness of the perfection (fulfilling the Six Paramitas and myriad practices, and obtaining Bodhi). See also: Northern Buddhism, Southern Buddhism.

Maitreya Bodhisattva. A Bodhisattva predicted to succeed Shakyamuni as a future Buddha. Also called Ajita, meaning "invincible".

Mandala. A Sanskrit word meaning "circle". Usually means formal, geometric representations that show divinities or the relationship among divinities as they exist in their own spheres of energy within the Buddhist cosmos. A place to practise the teachings of the Buddha.

Mani pearl. Also known as Cintamani. The talismanic pearl, a symbol of bestowing fortune and capable of fulfilling every wish.

Manjushri Bodhisattva. The Bodhisattva foremost in wisdom.

Mantra. Mantras are series of secret sounds that invoke responses. Their benefits include healing illness, eradicating offences, stopping evil and producing goodness. It is the secret language of all Buddhas. Also known as Dharani.

Modes of birth. Also known as four forms of birth. A classification of the ways of coming into existence. They are:

- 1) Birth from the womb.
- 2) Birth from eggs.
- 3) Birth from moisture.
- 4) Birth by transformation. (Such beings, after the end of their previous lifetime, suddenly appear in this fashion due to their karma, without the help of parents or any other intermediary agency).

Mudra. Mudrani; a seal; sign; token; hand or finger sign. Ritual gestures of the hands used in symbolic magic.

Nayuta. An extremely large number.

Nine types of life form. Include beings in four forms of birth (egg-born, born from a womb, moisture-born, and miraculously born), beings with form, without form, with perception, without perception, and with neither perception nor non-perception.

Nirvana. A Sanskrit word that is interpreted to mean "perfect stillness". There are four kinds of Nirvana:

- 1) Nirvana of the pure, clear self-nature. The self-nature is inherent in everyone-sages and ordinary beings alike -and is not subject to birth and death.
- 2) Nirvana with residue. One is still subject to share-section birth and death of the physical body and its lifespan.
- 3) Nirvana without residue. Share-section birth and death are ended, as are afflictions.
- 4) Nirvana of no dwelling. Wisdom and compassion interact and those who have attained this Nirvana continue to take beings across but are not subject themselves to birth and death.

Northern Buddhism. Also known as Mahayana Buddhism, the Great Vehicle. One of the two main traditions of Buddhism, the other being Theravada. Mahayana is now prevalent in the northeast area (China, Tibet, Mongolia, Vietnam, Korea, Japan, etc.). It expounds Bodhisattva practice as the means towards enlightenment of both oneself and others. Northern Buddhism is called Great Vehicle because its teachings are like a vast wagon capable of carrying many to release from rebirth. See also: Mahayana, Southern Buddhism.

Pratyekabuddha. Pratyekabuddhas are holy sages who become enlightened by contemplating conditions. When there is a Buddha in the world, they are called Those

Enlightened to Conditions. When there is no Buddha in the world, they are called Solitarily Enlightened Ones because they are able to become enlightened by themselves.

Precepts. The moral conduct set forth by the Buddhas. The precepts are rules that include:

- 1) restraints against immoral actions;
- 2) guidance in doing good; and
- 3) guidance in helping other beings.

There are five precepts (held for life), eight seclusion precepts (held for periods of time), and Bodhisattva Precepts for laity; Ten or Shramaneri Precepts for novice monks and nuns; Ten Major and Forty-eight Minor Bodhisattva Precepts for monks and nuns; 250 Bhiksu Precepts for monks, and 348 Bhiksuni Precepts for nuns.

Puja. Offering in the form of flowers, incense, jewels, etc.

Pure Land. Generally, refers to pure places where Buddhas dwell. The lands are made pure by the power of the Buddhas' vows. Specifically, this term often refers to Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss. The Pure Land teaching emphasises the practice of constant mindfulness and recitation of Amitabha Buddha's name in order to be reborn in the Western Pure Land. See also: Land of Ultimate Bliss.

Putana. Smelly demon or stinking hungry demon. Also known as fever- or disease-causing demon. Externally, this demon has a pig-like appearance, and may cause children to cry and be frightened in their sleep.

Raksasa. Male demons are called Raksasa, female, Raksasi. Terrifying spirits or demons able to fly or walk, and like to devour human flesh and blood. Ratna-shikhi. See Seven Tathagatas.

Samadhi. Concentration attained through meditation. There are many types and levels of samadhi.

Samsara. The relentless cycle of repeated birth and death in which ordinary, unenlightened sentient beings are deeply entangled. The cause of Samsara is the presence of defilements, particularly greed, hatred and delusion. Also known as cycles of birth and death. See also: Transmigration.

Samyak-sambuddha. One of the ten titles that all Buddhas have. It means "Proper and Equal Enlightenment".

Sangha. The monastic order of Buddhist monks and nuns. See also: Triple Jewel.

Sanskrit. The ancient spoken and written language of India, in which the canonical texts of the Mahayana are composed.

School of Tian Tai. A major Mahayana school that takes the Lotus Sutra as its principal

text. Historically, it has had a close relationship with Pure Land.

School of Vajrayana. Tibetan Buddhism. It is hierarchical and presided over by the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama.

Seven noble wealth and seven precious wealth. Seven noble wealth are faith, precepts, repentance, reformation, ability to hear the proper Dharma, giving and wisdom. The seven precious wealth are the seven types of worldly jewels that are gold, silver, lazuli, crystal, sapphire, rosy pearls and cornelian.

Seven Tathagatas. During the meal offering ceremony to the beings in the ghost realm, the names of these seven Buddhas are recited as follows:

- 1) Pra-bhuta-ratna; 2) Ratna-shikhi; 3) Surupaya; 4) Vipula Gatra;
- 5) Abhyam Kara; 6) Amrta Rajaya; 7) Amitabhaya.

Shakyamuni Buddha. The only Buddha to appear in the world in the so-called historical period. Born in India as a prince named Siddhartha Gautama, he renounced wealth, pleasures, family, and royal position and became a wandering mendicant. After six years of extreme asceticism in the Himalayas, he sat under the Bodhi Tree for forty-nine days and realised perfect enlightenment. For forty-nine years he travelled widely in India and taught living beings the Way to Buddhahood. At the age of eighty he entered Maha Parinirvana.

Sharira. Relics or ashes left after the cremation of a Buddha or sage, placed in stupas (pagodas) and worshipped.

Six desires. The desire of form, desire of appearance and countenance, desire of dignified manner and conduct, desire of speech and sound, desire of smoothness and suppleness, desire of the mark of person.

Six paths. The paths within the realm of Birth and Death. They include the paths of gods, humans, Asuras, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell-beings. Also known as Six realms.

Six realms. See Six paths.

Southern Buddhism. Also known as Theravada Buddhism, Early Buddhism. One of the two major streams of Buddhism, the other being Mahayana. The general name for the early Buddhism propagated after Asoka in the south of India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, etc. The scriptures preserved in these countries are written in the Pali language and belong to the Theravada teachings. Practitioners aim at attaining the state of Arhat. It is distinguished from Mahayana in putting emphasis on one's own liberation, whereas the teaching of Mahayana stresses the attainment of Buddhahood for all sentient beings. Unlike Mahayana schools, the Theravada tradition makes no mention of Amitabha Buddha, the Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, etc. or the Pure Land. Theravadins believe mainly in Shakyamuni Buddha and the Maitreya Bodhisattva, but not in the

numerous transhistorical Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the Mahayana tradition. This is because Theravada stresses the historical Buddha and His early teachings, applying the term Bodhisattva mainly to the previous incarnations of Shakyamuni Buddha.

Sramana. See Sangha.

Stupas. Structures or mounds that hold the relics (sharira) and other remains, such as teeth, bones and so forth, of sages, Bodhisattvas and Buddhas.

Sutras. Records of the sermons and conversations of the Buddhas and/ or the Bodhisattvas or other enlightened disciples of the Buddha.

Tathagata. One of the ten titles that all Buddhas have. It means "not coming and not going".

Ten evil deeds. Killing, stealing, sexual misconduct; duplicity (slander), harsh speech, lying, irresponsible speech (empty chatter); greed, hatred and stupidity.

The Way. See Way to Enlightenment.

Three evil paths. See Evil paths.

Three periods of time. 1) Past; 2) Present; 3) Future.

Three personal provisions. In Pure Land terminology, provisions stand for Faith, Vows and Practice which are considered the personal provisions or qualifications that a Pure Land adept needs to have to achieve rebirth in Pure Land.

Three poisons. The three defilements that cause transmigration in the cycles of birth and death, i.e. greed (desire), hatred and delusion. Also known as thieving afflictions.

Three profound skills. Also known as Three-fold Training, Three Non-outflow Studies. The three inseparable aspects of the practice of Buddhism are:

- 1) Precepts: training in moral discipline;
- 2) Samadhi: training the mind (of concentration);
- 3) Wisdom: training in wisdom (prajna).

Three realms. The realms inhabited by unenlightened beings that are:

- 1) The realm of desire;
- 2) The realm of form;
- 3) The realm of formlessness.

Transfer merits. The concept of merit transference, or sharing one's own merits and virtues with others.

Transmigration. Samsara in Sanskrit. This refers to the continuous cycles of death and rebirth in the six paths of gods, humans, Asuras, animals, hungry ghosts and beings in the hells.

Trayastrimsa Heaven. The second of the six heavens in the realm of desire. Also known as Heaven of the Thirty-three.

Tripitaka. Buddhist Canon. Usually called 'Three Baskets' because the Buddha's teaching were categorised into three main canonical divisions of:

Sutra (sermons or discourses of the Buddha);

Vinaya (Code of Discipline);

Abhidharma (commentarial literature on the Buddha's teachings).

Triple Jewel. The Buddhas (fully enlightened beings), the Dharma (the teachings of Buddhas), and the Sangha (the community of monks and nuns, who may be either sages or ordinary people, who have renounced the household life and cultivate the Way).

Under world. The realm of King Yama, ghost realm.

Upasaka, Upasika. Respectively a Buddhist layman and laywoman who have taken refuge with the Triple Jewel.

Usnisa. Crown of head of the Buddha.

Vajra. A Sanskrit word which means "durable", "luminous", and "able to cut". It is indestructible and is usually represented by diamond.

Vyakarana. The prediction of Buddhahood. Prophecy of attainment of Buddhahood in a future existence given by a Buddha to some close disciples. In certain cases, the Buddha also reveals the name and type of Buddhahood the disciple will preside over.

Way place. See Bodhimanda.

Way to Enlightenment. The spiritual path of cultivation; the ultimate truth, which is realised through following that path. Also known as the Way, Bodhi Path.

World Honoured One. See Bhagavan.

Wu Tai Mountain. Located in the northeast portion of Shanxi Province in China, this mountain rises in five terraces to a height of 3,600 feet, which has given it the name Wu Tai, the Five Platforms. This mountain is sacred to Manjushri Bodhisattva.

Yaksa. A type of ghost which travels extremely quickly. Yaksas serve as messengers between various parts of the world because of their great speed.

Zen School. The word Zen comes from the Sanskrit "dhyana" (meditation). It was transcribed as Ch'an in Chinese and Zen in Japanese. A school of Mahayana Buddhism in China founded by Bodhidharma (6th Century). This school stresses the cultivation of intuitive wisdom. An extremely influential Buddhist school in East Asia.